

Brazilian State and Society: Towards a Global Interpretation¹

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Abstract

Presented is a historical synthesis of the development of the modern Brazilian state since its patrimonial origin. The peculiarity of its patrimonialism is examined against the historical background of Spanish-American patterns of state building. The process of bureaucratization & the institutionalization of a legal-rational pattern of authority during the nineteenth century is examined through the role of the Guarda Nacional, a corporation of freemen & honorarios in care of administrative tasks. The dynamics of the modern state are interpreted by examining the trends toward increasing centralization & bureaucratic authoritarianism as well as the collective demands for social & political participation. The role of the positivist ideology, well adjusted to the centralized character of the new bureaucratic administration, is examined. Dynamics are also illustrated by examining two approaches to education in the second quarter of this century: the liberal & scientific strategy sponsored by the U system in Sao Paulo vs. the technical & positivist one sponsored by the federal administration. Original, historical sources are interpreted. (Copyright 1978, Sociological Abstracts, Inc., all rights reserved.).

¹ A shorter version of this section appeared in Fernando Uricoechea, *Patrimonialism, Electoral Patterns and Social Stratification in Imperial Brazil* (Rio de Janeiro IUPERJ, 1977).

I

The history of the modern state is the history of the bureaucratization of its administrative apparatus. Whether a given state is categorized as capitalist or socialist, developed or underdeveloped, industrial or agrarian, there is no question but that the progress of this political structure has been in the direction of bureaucracy. We have, moreover, gone so far in that process that it is no longer relevant to classify the plurality of existing states according to their degree of bureaucratization. This does not mean, of course, that all types of bureaucratized states are alike. On the contrary, the intellectual and political traditions of modern states embody two opposite meanings of bureaucracy: one is the Weberian sense of a responsible, efficient, rational and impersonal organization; the other is the more popular sense of an autocratic, insensitive, inefficient and self-centered body of functionaries.

From a Weberian perspective of ideal types, the second meaning represents a perversion of the first. Yet, modern bureaucracy actually has these two faces which tend to appear at different times and places according to specific conditions. The present analysis of the development of modern Brazil is, essentially, an essay on how these two faces of the country's modern bureaucracy have played their deadly game throughout history.

Whereas today bureaucracy is a political *a priori*, historically, bureaucratic rule did not necessarily follow as a matter of course. A considerable portion of Max Weber's work has been devoted precisely to this general question and to a specification of the devices that the state resorts to in order to look after its administrative interests. Patrimonialism has been identified as one of the most pervasive and generalized forms of pre-bureaucratic administration. Evolving out of the administrative differentiation of the patriarchal household, that is, with the emergence of a patriarchal staff, Patrimonialism became a basic form of traditional domination. In contrast with the feudal forms of domination, where the patriarchal lord rules with the assistance of *free vassals* under Patrimonialism, he rules with the assistance of a staff of patrimonially *dependent officers*.

Thus, the type of traditional domination that, in the long run, is to prevail historically is to a large degree dependent on the existence of a stratum of independent, allodial landlords.

Where historical accidents encourage the transformation of that *stratum* into a corporate and conscious *status group* of landlords, and its development into a political corporation, feudal forms of domination are institutionalized. Where, on the other hand, historical accidents stifle the emergence of a corporate status group of landlords with an independent base and where, therefore, the lord paramount is not a *primus inter pares* but an unquestioned ruler, the community's political development is thwarted and perverted. Public life, that is, remains a *domestic* concern of the lord paramount: no differentiation is established between household and *res publica*. Where feudal forms prevail, a political pact between freemen is in the offing. As opposed to the patrimonial contract which remains a domestic one, the feudal contract is the first *political* contract, that is to say, it is the first truly genuine *public* contract. This is the basic reason for the importance attached by Montesquieu, Marx, Wittfogel and contemporary students like Barrington Moore, to the association between feudalism and democracy.

Ordinarily, however, this *political* difference between feudalism and Patrimonialism has been ignored. In its stead, we have been offered an administrative difference which does not withstand serious criticism. We have been repeatedly told that Patrimonialism is administration by patrimonial retainers whereas feudalism is administration by independent lords. Although this is formally correct, it is also true, as Weber remarked, that both forms of administration are patrimonial. Both, that is, are conducted without an institutional differentiation between the officer's private patrimony and the community's public resources; both partake of particularism, diffuseness and ascription. The normative system which determines the officer's actions is in both cases the same, insofar as in both cases the distinction between private and public has not yet been institutionalized. It is only later, with the arrival of a distinctly public domain, that an impersonal, universalistic and functionally specific and performance oriented normative system of action for the officer can obtain. Only then, in other words, do rational legal principles of legitimacy obtain and allow for bureaucratic rule.

From this standpoint, the mere presence of administrative officers is a poor index of the degree of bureaucratization, feudalization or patrimonialization of office. What counts is ultimately the kind of principle that legitimates the administration's system of action:

whether traditional, as in the case of patrimonial and feudal domination, or legal rational, as in the case of bureaucratic rule.

Thus approached, the distinction between Patrimonialism and feudalism is much more political than administrative. Although they stem from a common administrative pattern, the two systems differ in the kind of solidarity that binds the officer to the ruler. Under Patrimonialism, *administration is entrusted* to administratively and economically dependent retainers; in the case of feudalism, *administration is shared* with politically independent vassals. In the former case, the patrimonial *prebend*, the right to personally appropriate the values and utilities derived from the exercise of office, is a right that inheres in the office; in the latter case, the feudal benefice, the right of appropriation inheres into the officer. Thus, the patrimonial prebend, by remaining associated with the office, contributes to the stereotyping of a set of official procedures and also contributes, paradoxically and unexpectedly, to the subsequent institutionalization of an impersonal, bureaucratic rule. It is here that we must look for the patrimonial origins of the modern bureaucratic state. The prebendalization of office, the patrimonial state, is thus clearly significant in the subsequent development of bureaucratic forms of political domination.

Modern, rational-legal type of political domination shares with traditional Patrimonialism the administrative officer's dependence on the political ruler. It shares with traditional feudalism the existence of a political pact which binds the administrative officer and limits the scope of what he can do. Ultimately, it tends to replace the prebendalization of public offices with patterns of administrative efficiency and political responsiveness. This means that the transition from traditional Patrimonialism to modern rational-legal rule is never a matter of course: it depends, as was the case with the industrial revolution in Western Europe, on the historical combination of increasing administrative expansion with the development of independent political forces which can reproduce, in a modern context, the political pact that was the basis of traditional, feudal domination.

Bureaucratic administration may develop even in the absence of such a combination. The resulting type of domination will share with the ideal-typical bureaucracy the officer's dependence on the political ruler and the government's use of rational means to attain its goals. But it will lack the mechanisms of political control of the public administration by

organized sectors of society, which are typical of rational legal domination in the Western democracies²

One of the reasons why authoritarian bureaucracies still abide by the rules of rationality is that the use of rational thinking and the exercise of political power 'on behalf of the people' appear to be the best way to legitimize the exercise of public authority in the modern world. However, authoritarian bureaucracy tends to avoid and limit the development of independent political actors in society, and tries, instead, to legitimize itself through direct appeals to "the people" as a whole (referred to as Bonapartism, plebiscitarianism or populism by different authors). This type of bureaucracy tends to maximize substantive rationality, at the expense of formal rationality; in other words, it tends to seek its goals irrespective of rules and procedures. However, the continuous appeal to substantive rationality tends to create insecurity and unpredictability within the bureaucracy itself. As a result a double standard develops: strict formal rationality applies in the bureaucracy's own ranks and substantive rationality in its dealings with the rest of society. In the long run, substantive rationality is alternately or fully replaced by sheer coercion. This is, typically, what happens when political power is controlled by the military as a corporation.

As all bureaucratic administrations, but more so, authoritarian bureaucracies are afflicted by the tendency of the office-holders to appropriate their offices for private benefit and to become a status group on its own right. In the long run, this process lowers administrative efficiency in meeting the goals set by the political rulers. The conflict between political rulers and public officers is the typical problem of bureaucratic rule without a political pact, i.e., of bureaucratic authoritarianism. In contrast, the conflict between legal constraints and the public bureaucracy's demands for substantive rationality can be considered the typical political problem of modern, rational-legal, democratic societies.

The distinction between these two types of bureaucratic rule, authoritarian or democratic - how and why they evolve and the consequences to be expected from each type - is one

² For a discussion on the application of these concepts to Brazil, see Schwartzman, S., "Back to Weber: Corporatism and Patrimonialism in the Seventies," in J. Malloy, ed., *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976.

of the crucial questions of modern political analysis. Traditional domination in its two main variants, Patrimonialism and feudalism, is a thing of the past. But the basic political concept that differentiates these two systems, i.e., the presence or absence of a political pact controlling the powers of the rulers and the way public administration is performed - is as present and as important as ever. This is why it is worth inquiring how political power and public administration were established in a country like Brazil and how the process led to the country's present political configuration.

II³

As a purely rational concept, the notion of patrimonial state is merely an expedient way to create a theoretical synthesis from an empirical variety of historically significant elements. As a matter of fact, the historical - as opposed to the ideal - forms of patrimonialism have been associated with varying types of bureaucratic administration. Typical of the actual, historical pattern is the concept of patrimonial bureaucracy. Characteristically, the center of the administrative apparatus is organized according to bureaucratic norms executed by a salaried officialdom, whereas the political periphery of the community exhibits an administrative organization according to bureaucratic and traditional norms executed by some salaried officials along with a group of prebendaries or local *honoratios*.

What characterizes this administrative organization at the periphery as patrimonial is the fact that public office is attributed to local notables as a prebend, or a concession, from the central political power, which also controls an independent, professional bureaucratic administration. Were the principle of legitimization different - that is, were the source of administrative authority the social status of the officeholder - we would be facing a political component which is more typical of feudal authority systems. This difference in principle is obviously related, among other things, to the actual monopoly the central

³ This section appears also in Uricechea, Patrimonialism, op. cit. For a more comprehensive interpretation, cf. Uricechea, O Minotauro Imperial: A burocratização do estado patrimonial brasileiro. São Paulo: DIFEL, 1978, forthcoming), and Uricechea, "Formación y expansión del estado burocrático-patrimonial en Colombia y Brasil, " in Eugene Havens et al., (eds.), Metodología y desarrollo en las ciencias sociales (Bogotá: CEDE, Universidad de los Andes, 1977).

administration has on the military, economic and administrative resources necessary for the exercise of public authority.

The predominance of patrimonialism means the maintenance of the dependency of peripheral groups on the central power, and the privatization of some areas of public administration. The presence of the feudal principle means that the local status groups see themselves as independent and entitled to a share of political power, and thus the presence of a public administration based on a political pact. The side to which a given political system leans depends on several historical circumstances, among them the relative amount of resources available to the central government and to the local administrative authorities.

The development of the Brazilian political state is probably the best illustration of this pattern of patrimonial bureaucracy in Latin America. In fact, the more bureaucratic sectors of the royal administration during the colonial period were those associated with the Exchequer and the administration of justice. Given the paucity of officials and the scarcity of fiscal resources, the state had to trust the local administration of government, for the vast periphery of the political community, to military prebendaries who would receive large tracts of land -- *sesmarias* - as patrimonial beneficiaries

By and large, the Spanish bureaucratic state in America resorted to a similar patrimonial arrangement for the political organization of the state. The typical form of benefice in that case was the *encomienda*, a rent-producing right based on exploitation of the indigenous labor force. In contrast with the *sesmaria*, the *encomienda* did not formally grant property rights over the land but only over its native inhabitants.

In both empires, the more bureaucratic sectors of the royal administration were the same: exchequer and justice. In both cases, moreover, the administrative enterprise developed along two movements: through the institutionalization of bureaucratic forms of government in the central and urban areas; and through the prebendalization of the local functions of government in the polity's peripheral and rural areas.

Two major accidents, however, influenced the differential development of bureaucracy in the Portuguese and the Spanish territories. These two accidents speeded the process of bureaucratization in the Spanish territories and slowed down the same process in Brazil,

insofar as it contributed to maintain the existence of a dilettante administration in the periphery of the state. Both these accidents had to do with the availability of alternative forms of office prebendalism besides the one based on land grants. While the Spanish territories had such alternatives, the Portuguese territories did not.

The first was the demographic density of the indigenous populations. The existence of large groups of sedentary cultures in Spanish America gave the central state the opportunity to grant its administrative officials the right to exact tributes from the Indian. The official's pressure for the appropriation of land was, thus, reduced and this eventuated in milder forms of land prebendalism. That manorial context of labor exploitation was lacking in Brazil. There, the semi-sedentary character and the sparse density of the indigenous population inhibited the possibility of deriving benefices for the administrative official through the exploitation of the Indian. Land prebendalism was, thus, reinforced as a typically Brazilian pattern of patrimonial benefice.

The second accident was the discovery of mineral resources. The most cursory glance at the comparative production figures of the two Empires would readily show a marked contrast: whereas the mining period in Brazil did not last for more than two generations -- basically the second half of the 18th century -- the Spanish Crown enjoyed a permanent flow of metals from the mining areas of Mexico, Colombia and Peru throughout the entire period of monarchical rule over its territory. As a result, the relative abundance of fiscal resources led to the creation of a salaried officialdom and further stifled land prebendalism in the Spanish empire. Added to the scarcity of a tributary population, the meagerness of fiscal resources encumbered the transformation of the patrimonial officials into salaried bureaucrats. Without Indians and gold, land was the only available resource the state had at its disposal to pay for the services of its officials. It could hardly transform the patrimonial prebend into the bureaucratic salary.

Thus, during the second half of the 18th century, while the Latin American states were intensifying the process of bureaucratization, the Portuguese state in America launched a new administrative policy whereby local groups were actively encouraged to participate in the construction of the state's administrative apparatus. In other words, while Hispanic America was gradually moving toward a more bureaucratic pattern of government,

Portuguese America continued to encourage the development of a patrimonial bureaucracy.

Needless to say, despite the intensification of bureaucratic traits in the Hispanic American states, traces of patrimonialism remained in the administrative structure. Thus, both the Hispanic American states and the Brazilian states continued in the first decades of the 19th century to display administrative patterns of organization that were typical of their patrimonial heritage. Characteristically, for instance, the functional diffuseness of office and the simplified and schematic form of the structure of public expenditure apparatus continued during the first three or four decades. Three or four secretaries were enough to cover the administration's basic needs. Exchequer, war and *culto* gave total coverage to those fiscal needs. Any other need was met through the patrimonial assistance of local groups of *honoratarios*. Even in the 1840s, the Colombian state coped with all its administrative requirements by means of a schematic structure that consisted of just four secretaries: *interior* and foreign relations, *hacienda*, war, and navy. The Brazilian state similarly consisted of *império*, justice, *fazenda*, war, and navy.

All the same, administrative differentiation proceeded at a higher speed in the Spanish American countries. The 1840s mark the beginning of this difference in administrative reaction. In Brazil the only modification in terms of more administrative specialization took place in 1860 with the creation of a new office of agriculture and commerce; in contrast, Colombia had, as far back as the 1850s, created a differentiated structure made up of twelve secretaries.

There is another area in which the different styles of state building reproduce the difference in patrimonial heritage, namely, the process of administrative centralization. It is reasonable to assume that the process of bureaucratization implies the relative spreading of bureaucratic offices to the periphery of the political community, whereas the patrimonial pattern somehow maintains the periphery relatively intractable to the institutionalization of public office. More bureaucratic politics will, consequently, have a relatively less centralized distribution of fiscal expenditures. In contrast, less bureaucratic politics tend to concentrate the fiscal resources of the state at the center. A rapid look at the pattern of regional distribution of public expenditure in Brazil and Colombia will

illustrate that proposition. The contrasts could not be more remarkable; whereas the first three Brazilian provinces account for three-quarters of public expenditures, the first three Colombian provinces just spend one-quarter, and only thirteen manage to spend what in Brazil is spent by the first three. Equally remarkable is that the Court in Brazil spends the aggregate expenditure of the top six Colombian provinces.

The continued presence of a patrimonial-bureaucracy in Brazil well into the 19th century, at a time when the neighboring countries had more or less fully bureaucratized their state apparatuses, is partly attributed to the so-called *Guarda Nacional*, a corporate association of Brazilian freemen entrusted by the state with patrimonial functions of local government.

As mentioned earlier the Brazilian state had not been immune to the idea of patrimonial administration during the colonial period. Yet, the state had never devised a systematic policy of patrimonial assistance from private groups. It had, of course, resorted to those groups whenever the needs of the administration and the scarcity of bureaucratic officials and fiscal resources so demanded. Patrimonialism, that is, had not been a conscious and systematic political strategy. The creation of the *Guarda Nacional*, however, modified that general picture. For the first time private groups were legally enlisted as freemen and *not as public officials* for the organization of local government.

As extemporaneous and anachronistic as such a measure may appear when seen from the historical perspective of comparative state building, the creation of a liturgical corporation of freemen to meet administrative needs was a direct response to the practical demands of government created by the recent autonomy of the new independent Brazilian state⁴.

Created by law in 1831 ostensibly as an instrument for military defense against possible royalist attempts to restore the Portuguese dynasty, the new state authorities nonetheless

⁴ Already in the last quarter of the 18th century the Colombian state had its patrimonial structure trimmed at the periphery. Cf. José María Ots Capdequí, *Instituciones de gobierno del Nuevo Reino de Granada durante el siglo XVIII* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1950); J. M. Ots Capdequí, *Nuevos aspectos del siglo XVIII Española en América* (Bogotá: Editorial Centro, 1946), and Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, *Diferenciación social en el Nuevo Reino de Granada en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1967).

attributed to the liturgical corporation of freemen functions of local justice, police and internal defense. The manifest functions of the corporation were thus not limited to those of attacks from foreign enemies but included a variety of internal tasks ranging from the stifling of internal rebellions, the repression of slave insurrections (and, later, of the slave trade), the collection of taxes, the transportation of convicts, the execution of judicial errands, the protection of local inhabitants against marauders and bandits, the policing of towns and cities and a variety of chores otherwise ascribed to police and administrative agencies of the state.

The whole collective enterprise behind the organization of the *Guarda Nacional* was no simple or adjective matter. It implied the militarization of the national community to an unprecedented level and, what was even a more formidable task, the collective acceptance by the freemen of the polity of their liturgical obligations as institutional duties that could not be legitimately waived. The smooth functioning of the corporation was, in other words, predicated to a large extent on the existence of a status order that would sanction those obligations as a matter of course.

Although the colonial and institutional history of Brazil was suffused with a considerable dose of militarization, the institutionalization of a status order, that is, the existence of status groups with peculiar social honor, a transparent consciousness of genteel and culturally privileged forms of action setting the group apart and at a distance from a surrounding community which, in turn, has some kind of service obligation, traditionally defined, toward the former - - was a problematic fact. There were unquestionably incipient attempts in the direction of institutionalization of such a status order. But the objective conditions obtaining in colonial Brazil did not favor the development of such a formidable status project.

For all that, the *Guarda Nacional* managed to establish a relatively successful record of liturgical assistance for the patrimonial discharge of administrative duties during two generations of Brazilian political life.

The role of the *Guarda Nacional* as a militia organization was a complex one in terms of its effects upon the social and political organization of the Brazilian state. They were instrumental in the integration of the periphery to a national system of political

institutions; moreover, as the retainers of a substantial amount of autonomous power, they were responsible for the development of a political stratum of rural origin which led to the progressive institutionalization of a new, legal rational legitimacy through which the political power was to be exercised. This process was not, of course, smooth and uneventful. The 19th century in Brazil is characterized by protracted conflicts between the central government and its administrative and military bureaucracy, on the one hand, and local militia, organized by local notables, on the other. In the end, however, the central administration prevails, after the military build-up brought on by the Paraguayan war of the late sixties, which coincides with the time when the *Guarda Nacional* is stripped of its liturgical functions.

The *Guarda Nacional* established a continuity with the past that makes its modernizing effects still more remarkable. This continuity was clearly visible in two areas. One was a pattern of government that was heavily predicated upon the active cooperation of local groups and classes in the daily administration of the state. In this respect, there are two differences worth mentioning between the patrimonialism of Colonial Brazil and the patrimonial variety of Imperial Brazil. As mentioned earlier, the colonial pattern of patrimonialism was not so much a deliberate and designed administrative policy of the metropolitan state but simply the result of convenience and opportunity. In addition, the colonial variety of patrimonialism was largely based on an official policy of land prebendalism that gave a rather restricted character to the patrimonial cooperation of civilian groups. On the other hand, in the imperial variety of patrimonialism, land prebendalism was not used as a means to enlist the private cooperation of individuals for state functions; second, the creation of a corporation especially designed for that purpose gave 19th century patrimonialism a much more collective character and it implied a more thorough mobilization of the agrarian society for the execution of administrative tasks.

It is in this difference in the pattern of patrimonial interaction between the state and the local groups where it is possible to find one interpretation for the rationalizing influence of imperial patrimonialism in comparison with the colonial type. This latter type, as described, maintained a relative distance between the prebendary official and the central bureaucracy without corporative mediations between the two. Consequently, the official's

exposure to a bureaucratic, legal rational practice was rather weak. Similarly, given the lack of a corporate mediation, whatever rationalizing effects the official's administrative behavior might have had, these effects could not seriously affect the administrative patterns of the royal bureaucracy. As a result, the bureaucratization of the state could in all probability proceed without affecting - - and unaffected by - - the patrimonial structure of local government. The imperial type of patrimonialism was another story. The corporate mediation established by the *Guarda Nacional* between the state bureaucrats and the local patrimonial officers significantly reduced the distance between them and allowed the reciprocal influencing of traditional and rational patterns of administrative orientation. The very existence of a legal code (i.e., the organic laws of the *Guarda Nacional*) prescribing the official obligations of corporate officials with regard to the state apparatus, made it possible for them to demand, whenever needed, a rational, bureaucratic behavior from a state apparatus whose discretion and particularism had not been previously challenged. Ironically, then, the patrimonial organization unwillingly contributed to the institutionalization of a bureaucratic order.

It was the gradual institutionalization of that new administrative order that transformed the liturgical corporation into a merely vicarious association of agrarian notables. It is this vicarious "club" of landed patricians, the so-called *coronéis*, that retains some hold over the nation's collective memory. For unknown reasons, the historiographic representation of the *Guarda Nacional* has neglected the first sixty years of corporate life, when the association was responsible for the patrimonial organization of local government. The last organic law of the *Guarda Nacional*, passed in 1873, in fact struck a very severe blow against the liturgical mission of the corporation. Stripped from its patrimonial functions in the daily organization of public life, now limited to tasks of extraordinary political contingency - - rebellions, revolutions and the like -- in a progressively pacified Empire; allowed to meet just one day every year - - as opposed to the daily regimentation of earlier times; deprived of its rank and file organization, the corporation could not but become a merely vicarious association of would-be commanders.

That change was, of course, a direct response to the progressive bureaucratization of police and judiciary functions by the central state. In that sense, it went hand in hand with

an also progressive depatrimonialization of the Brazilian administrative order and with the erection of a normative and institutional boundary between the public order and the civilian, private order.

The second area in which the *Guarda Nacional* helped create continuity with the past was the militarization of the local society of agrarian Brazil. It was, after all, thanks to the maintenance of this militarized character of the agrarian community that the central state managed to institutionalize a patrimonial administration predicated upon the discretionary employment of freemen.

The militarization of pre-industrial Brazil's social structure has received very little attention so far. That pattern can be traced back to the first century of colonization when the central state helped foster it by creating military prebends for territorial administration and creating *corpos de ordenanças* that would complement the military services of the regular, professional army. During the second half of the 17th century, moreover, the militias were called upon to contribute more decisively to the daily organization of local government. The dissolution of the militias in the first quarter of the 19th century did not put an end to a pattern of militarization that had somehow accompanied the organization of the state for over four hundred years. In fact, the old militias, loosely attached to the state were replaced by the *Guarda Nacional*, closely bound to the project of state building. The militarization of the agrarian society did not proceed during the Empire as merely an inertial residue of the colonial past, but actually *intensified* as an after-effect of the patrimonial program. In fact, the lack of a status order in the agrarian society of the time was a formidable obstacle for the institutionalization of collective liturgies on the part of the poor freemen. As a consequence, the need for *regimentation* of the local classes for the fulfillment of their administrative obligations was immediately felt. The sixty years of patrimonial experiment also represent sixty years of regimentation of the local community.

III

The transitions mentioned above cannot be considered a simple, smooth process of development, but rather the result of a complex pattern of conflicts and contradictory

developments which had to be spelled out. It is a significant feature of this pattern that it was unevenly distributed throughout Brazilian territory and thus led to quite different political subcultures that the country still witnesses today.

While the militarization of Brazilian traditional society was taking place as a means to impose patrimonial control over vast territories, a rather different pattern of military activities was taking place in the country's southern borders, where the Portuguese and Spanish Empires met. There, the constant fight against the Spaniards gave rise to a fully militarized society, where the open pampa provided grazing grounds for wild herds which fed an essentially nomadic population. As the population increased and the military conflicts intensified, formal military bands headed by local caudillos gave rise to a modern, bureaucratized military group, which became a full-fledged army during the war with Paraguay. Back from the war, the professional army could not accept the continuation of traditional civilian militarization as represented by the National Guard, even in its more symbolic forms. In the following decades, the military never lost its strong gaucho imprinting; but, at the same time, it became a major factor in the creation of a progressively strong and differentiated state administration at the local and national level⁵.

Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's southernmost region, was later to receive a significant number of Portuguese, German and Italian migrants who would eventually become wheat, fruit and wine growers, and jerked beef producers. However, the new Europeans and the new economic activities were not enough to change the state's political climate, closely controlled by a tight-knit, civilian-military elite. For a long time, this was the region that contributed most to the cadres of the Brazilian Army, and played a correspondingly central role in the country's politics, since, at least, the creation of the Republican Party of Rio Grande in 1882. In 1930, after almost forty years of an active presence in the country's political life, Getúlio Vargas comes to power, in a direct line of succession with the Rio Grande state oligarchy. With Vargas again in 1950, with the ill-

⁵ The text that follows is based, essentially, on Simon Schwartzman, *Sao Paulo e o Estado Nacional* (Sao Paulo, DIFEL, 1975). For the political role of Rio Grande do Sul, J. Love, *Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian Regionalism* (Stanford, 1971). For the Brazilian military, A. Stepan, *The Military in Politics* (Princeton 1971).

fated government of Joao Goulart from 1961 to 1964, and, after 1964, with the presidents Costa e Silva, Medici and Geisel, the *gaúcho* tradition of militarization and authoritarian control of public matters was to make its presence felt.

An important component of the Rio Grande tradition is the positivist ideology. Brazil is probably the only country in the world where Auguste Comte's ideas for the creation of modern, scientifically-run societies were taken quite literally. In their search for an orderly, bureaucratized and centralized public administration, the Brazilian military at the end of the last century, and their civilian counterparts found in Comte their perfect ideologue. Positivism talks about science, against theology and metaphysics, in favor of popular education, and, politically, in favor of enlightened despotism of those who know the truth. At the same time, positivism dismissed the need to search for truth, to foster the development of knowledge, and the free exercise of reason. You just have to believe in science - - as interpreted, of course, by those that know best - - and then act accordingly. Benjamin Constant, a military and civilian leader of the turn of the century, is probably responsible for introducing, in the Brazilian flag, Comte's motto, "Ordem e Progresso. " Writing to his wife from the front during the Paraguayan Campaign, he talks about positivism, "a new religion, but the most rational, the most philosophical, and the only one that follows from the laws that preside over human nature. It could not be the first, because its rise depended on knowledge of all laws of nature. This religion could not have emerged in the childhood of mankind, and not even when the various sciences were still in their beginnings; and it would still not have emerged were it not for the admirable spirit of Auguste Comte, to whom it was given, by the vastness of his intelligence, to bridge the centuries which are still to come, capturing by his wisdom the sciences at their culmination and giving us his scientific religion, the only and final religion of man kind⁶.

This closed ideology of order and progress was not a simple and chancy bit of 19th century scientism. It fit with the search for a centralized, bureaucratized political system which could at the same time incorporate the contributions of modern rationality to the growth of power and wealth, without their counterparts of free-thinking and political

⁶ Apud Ivan Lins, *História do Positivismo no Brasil* (Sao Paulo, Cia. Editora Nacional, 1967). See also, for a more general interpretation, Antonio Paim, *Historia das Ideias Filosóficas no Brasil* (Sao Paulo, USP Grijalbo, 1974).

liberalism. It also corresponded to a century-old Portuguese tradition, which started when Pombal, the prime minister of Portugal, decided to free his country from Jesuit control by transforming Coimbra into a modern, professional school. Throughout the 19th century, the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Sao Paulo were to be the seats of a few professional schools - - of law, engineering, medicine - - which were expected to produce administrators, officers, technicians and doctors needed to serve the country's elite. There was no interest in a university nor in scientific or cultural societies except as a hobby of His Imperial Highness, the Emperor of Brazil.

However, His Majesty was able to combine this tendency to autocracy with a liberal attitude toward the country's political life. This liberalism was, of course, relative: politics was fair game for the political leadership which was trained and groomed in the exercise of liturgical administration in the National Guard. They could choose to be Conservative, Liberal and, even, in a later period, Republican. Conservative and Liberal cabinets would replace each other as the Emperor, using his powers as *poder moderador*, saw fit. The cabinets were responsible to the Congress, but the Congress, of course, was elected as the government wanted. Less than 4 per cent of the country's population voted.

This combination of a strong, bureaucratized central administration and a relatively weak and dependent local landlord class in the countryside was to be shaken at the end of the 19th century by some fundamental changes that swept the country in its last decades. One of these changes was already mentioned, namely the creation of a large scale, bureaucratized army which became increasingly impatient with the tributes the central government had to pay to the political, civilian elite. Second, since 1850 Britain was able to put an effective end to the traffic of African slaves to Brazil, and with that the old economic order based on slave labor started to crumble. At the same time, coffee emerged as a new source of wealth for the country, starting in the slave-operated plantations in Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais, but soon moving to Sao Paulo, where a plantation economy based on immigrant, European labor was to develop.

Historically, the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo has been an area of independent settlement and exploration of the Brazilian countryside which often conflicted with the colonization effort conducted by the Portuguese crown. This conflict reached its peak in 1700, when

Paulista explorers finally discovered the gold-rich areas of Minas Gerais, and had to surrender control to the Portuguese administration, which, for that purpose, changed the capital of the colony from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. From that period until a century and a half later, Sao Paulo was to play a relatively marginal and obscure role in the country's life, until its emergence as the basis for the coffee economy at the end of the nineteenth century.

With the new military and the more modern forms of economic activities came a new political ideology, Republicanism. The Brazilian republican movement had, quite predictably, two - or perhaps three - very different versions. One was authoritarian, positivistic, modernizing. It was based on the more modern sectors of the national bureaucracy, the army, which blended with the political elite of Rio Grande do Sul, and had a strong plebiscitarian appeal to an emerging middle class who wanted "the people," and not the traditional politicians, to run the country. The second type of republicanism was, essentially, a liberalism which aimed to free the country's emerging capitalist sectors from their cumbersome dependency on the Imperial administration. It meant, essentially, political decentralization, freedom of movement for the state leaderships, free and direct trade relationships between the emerging economic sectors and the centers of world capitalism.

The political system that emerged was the least centralized political organization Brazil ever had. There was a political contract between the central administration and the state oligarchies, regular elections and succession of presidents. It was still a democracy of the few, and it actually meant that the military and political leaderships of the three biggest states in the country shared the political power, to the exclusion of urban groups as well as the rural poor.

This political arrangement was too feeble to withstand the pressures for social and political participation in Rio and Sao Paulo, the unrest of a new generation of young officers, and the contemporary requirements of a more effective government on the post-depression economy. The result was another political shift, which in 1930 reestablished the political centralization which had been the landmark of the 19th century.

The nature of the 1930 revolution is one of the crucial questions in the interpretation of Brazilian social and political history. After 1930 the country started its process of industrialization, which led many to consider that this was the first Brazilian bourgeois government. But there were no bourgeois leaderships in sight, which led others to consider it as a middle-class revolution. In fact, most of the "middle class" leaders were military, although the regime itself did not assume a military character. Actually, the new regime combined the support of some sectors of the traditional state oligarchies, the unrest of the military groups in the South of the country, and the dissatisfaction of the urban sectors in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in its establishment. Getúlio Vargas, the new leader, was a direct heir of the civilian-military oligarchy which had ruled Rio Grande do Sul for several decades. The tendency towards increasing centralization and authoritarianism, helped by the winds that blew from Europe, were unmistakable.

Nowhere was the resistance to the new regime stronger than in the state of Sao Paulo. In 1932 Sao Paulo rose in arms, the population was organized in militias, and people died in what became known as the "constitutionalist revolution. " The movement was defeated, its leadership had to go into exile for some time. But Sao Paulo was already the country's economic center, and some compromise had to be worked out. The refugees of 1932 were back to run the state in 1934, with a clear notion of what they lost and a definite intention to gain a political power which could be commensurate with their economic strength.

Again - - does history repeat itself? -- Sao Paulo was to be the center of a new liberalism, which opposed the centralizing tendencies of the national bureaucracy with the demand for a social contract which could check the expansion of unrestricted power on the part of an ever-growing and self-supporting autocratic bureaucracy. It is possible to say that nowhere was this new liberalism more evident than in the creation of the first Brazilian university, in 1934, the University of Sao Paulo.

Referring to this university, one of its pioneers, Julio de Mesquita Filho, had a vivid recollection of its social and political meaning: "Defeated in the revolution (of 1932), we knew perfectly well that only through science and persistence could we return to the hegemony we had enjoyed for so many decades in the Federation. *Paulistas* to the bone, we had inherited from our elders the endurance that was necessary for great undertakings.

And what higher monument could we raise to those who had sacrificed themselves for the preservation of our inheritance, from the Bandeiras through the Regency and the Republic, than a University?" (Inaugural speech at the School of Medicine of Ribeirao Preto, 1958.)

The new University was to bring science, education, reason, and, in the process, build a political elite which, through intellectual power, could recover what the state had lost in the political and military confrontations of naked power. The new University shared with its European counterparts of one or two centuries earlier a belief in the power of knowledge, research and culture to change and shape the future - - and it has to be said, in behalf of those ideas, that, in spite of all its shortcomings, this is still the most important and far-reaching experience in higher education Brazil has ever had.

This does not mean that the federal administration lacked an educational project of its own. This educational project was built up during the thirties, and in the early forties a complete educational system was established for the whole country. This system aimed to impart literacy, national values and technical training to the masses, humanistic training for the middle and higher strata, and professional and university degrees for the elite. The whole system was to be organized and controlled from above, the teaching of Portuguese was mandatory and primary education in foreign languages was forbidden. All was set for the establishment of a homogeneous, well- stratified, well-supervised and trained population, which could embody the ideals of an emerging nation-state. Within this system, a University could never be more than a place for the professional training of a technical elite, and for the diffusion of scientific knowledge which, according to the Positivistic outlook, was not a matter of research and inquiry, but of teaching and indoctrination.

It is possible to recognize in these two approaches to education and the role of the university two quite different ways to foster rationality and modernization. One nourishes itself in the European liberal tradition, and views education and scientific development as a means of increasing social consciousness, social participation, and, in the end, results in a political system which is centered and organized in behalf of a self-aware and alert citizenry. The other is essentially technocratic in spirit, and views education and

professional training as a means of mass regimentation for the building of a homogeneous and centralized nation.

It would be easy, and easily misleading, to attach a plus sign to the first and a minus sign to the second, and to understand this cleavage in Brazilian culture, ideology and politics as a well-defined conflict between good and evil. In fact, it is necessary to ask why the liberal ideals were so limited and weak even in those parts of the country where some kind of bourgeois revolution took place.

In Europe, the ideals of political liberalism, general education, scientific development and rationalization of public administration were all aspects of the social mobility of a new class which was able, for some time, to capture the imagination of an entire society in a challenge to values of the aristocratic past. As we know, this was not an easy process, and the rising bourgeoisie had to fight and, in the end, share a significant part of its newly-gained status and wealth with an increasingly organized and demanding working sector. In contrast, Brazilian liberalism already started in the higher rungs of the social ladder, in a modernizing elite without much of a revolution to perform and practically immune to pressures from below.

In other words, the key to understanding the weakness of Brazilian liberalism lies in the concept of an authoritarian, conservative modernization, carried out without a significant redistribution of resources to include the lower strata in the countryside⁷. Rather than having to fight against an old rural aristocracy, the new industrialists in the state of Sao Paulo were closely related to it. As the central administration began to implement a national policy of economic industrialization and to build up a modern infrastructure of services for the country, it became much more advantageous for the industrialists to cooperate with the government than to insist on their free market, non-interventionist values and on the reduction of public expenditure. The bitterness of 1932 did not wash

⁷ For an analysis of conservative modernization in the Brazilian countryside, see Elisa Pereira Reis, "Conservative Modernization in Brazilian Agriculture: the post-abolition plantation"; paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association meeting, Houston, Texas, November, 1977. For the identities between agricultural and industrialist groups in Sao Paulo, cf. Warren Dean, *The Industrialization of Sao Paulo, 1880-1945* (Texas, 1969).

away, but in the early forties it was already weak enough to allow the Paulista industrialists to participate in the country's drive for self-sufficiency during the war years.

Conservative modernization in the countryside and capitalist development through access to political favors, led to an extremely stratified society, which did little to foster the development of a modern market economy or of social participation, social mobility and income redistribution. It is from this perspective that the central administration with its centralized "people-oriented" substantive policies gains new significance. At its best, it can reach out to the nation as a whole, beyond and above the rich few, and provide something for the population as a whole - a more accessible educational system, some kind of social security, a policy for economic development, and mechanisms for the masses symbolic participation in national life, through radio and, especially, TV. At its worse, it means political patronage and fascism.

Brazilian history since the thirties should be understood in terms of the interplay between different trends, which were already present at that time: a trend towards an increasingly complex and sophisticated political stratum, which descends from the liturgical *honoratiores* of the past; a growing military and technocratic bureaucracy; a trend towards liberal politics; a trend towards increasing mass participation in the industrial and rural centers; and a process of continuous economic and technological modernization in the countryside, which is socially and politically conservative, leading to a continuous outflow of people from rural to urban centers⁸. Each of these "trends" correspond to different social groups and relatively autonomous social processes. They develop independently up to the point when they contradict each other. When this happens, political compromises are worked out, and sometimes open conflicts break up. The development of a political stratum is thus limited by the strength of the central bureaucracy; a civilian civil service cannot develop fully because there is no well organized political system to give it legitimacy and set its limits; the trends towards

⁸ For an overview of the political and social consequences of the process of rural-urban migration, see Elisa Pereira Reis and Simon Schwartzman, "Spatial Dislocation and Social Identity building: Brazil", forthcoming in the International Social Science Journal (Unesco, Paris, 1978). Above that, the country's political and military alignment with the West has defined, historically, fairly clear demarcation lines on how far plebiscitarian, populist and reformist leanings of its governments can go.

liberal politics are limited by the central administration's capacity to co-opt the emerging bourgeoisie to its projects of state-building; mass participation is limited by the process of conservative modernization in the countryside, and by the limits that the political and economic alliances of the state bureaucracy place in any moves towards some kind of participatory democracy. There is obviously, lastly, a military component in the public bureaucracy which tends to be more structured, efficient and heavy-handed than the remaining of the public sector.

To these internal trends and processes a very significant, external dimension should be added. Brazil is part of an international community which places very definite and important constraints on its development. Probably the most well-known of these constraints, and certainly a very important one, is Brazil's reliance on foreign capital and technology. Above that, the country's political and military alignment with the West has defined, historically, fairly clear demarcation lines on how far plebiscitarian, populist and reformist leanings of its governments can go.

But there is another external dimension which is also important: the presence of values, aspirations and motivations of Western society, which penetrate the country. They are the values of rich, consumption-oriented societies, which usually bring enormous pressures and almost impossible demands upon the country's economic system. But they can also carry such notions as personal freedom, freedom for social organization, social security, social equity, and even a critical view of the benefits of endless industrialization.

External factors are thus also contradictory, and they add to the internal trends in the determination of how and where the country can develop. They could, eventually, help to create a national public opinion which, in a context of increasing international awareness, could contribute to break the deadlock produced by the combination of authoritarian bureaucracy and conservative modernization which had so far prevailed in the country.

IV

If this ever happens, it might mean that it is possible to recreate a social pact which could support a new type of rational-legal public bureaucracy, without, and independently from, a bourgeois revolution that never was and never will be. It just may be that, in contemporary times, Sao Paulo or the liberal spirit it once embodied, could recover its

place as the center of the country's political life, but this time with a much more open and egalitarian system of social and political participation.

History is never simple and straightforward, and a paper-length global interpretation of Brazilian state and society could not hope to fare better. It is, however, possible to try to recover, at the end, the thread that supposedly pervades the centuries of history we so quickly tried to interpret.

Politically, the main question that concerns us is how the Brazilian state was established, how it modernized itself and how it became what it is today. This question is closely related to another, which deals with the relations between this state and the country's civil society throughout history.

We believe that there are at least two main dimensions for this analysis. One has to do with the process by which it evolved from a traditional to a modern type of bureaucratic administration. The other deals with the political content, the political pact that have historically supported the existence of this administration - and here we deal directly with the question of the relations between the state and the society as a whole.

We mentioned the main concepts and some more significant events and structures that highlight this history. First, the Weberian concept of patrimonialism, as a species of traditional domination, helped us to see that there are several roads to modernization, each leading to quite different states in the modern times. Then we dealt with one of the most significant political structures of the country in its period of state building in the 19th century, the *Guarda Nacional*. We saw how it helped to create a modern and far reaching governmental structure in the absence of economic resources similar to the gold that helped to create the much more bureaucratized structures in Spanish America. At the same time, we saw how the *Guarda Nacional* was too weak as a political structure to withstand the centralizing tendencies which followed the creation of a modern army during the Paraguayan campaign in the 1870's.

After that, we tried to show how Brazil's political history could be seen in terms of a protracted conflict between two opposite tendencies, towards centralization and towards decentralization. We suggested that these are not simple ideological options. The first tend to be authoritarian, nationalistic, and sometimes populist and plebiscitarian; the

second tends to be liberal, oligarchic, cosmopolitan, and sometimes democratic. We discussed the transition of 1930's to illustrate the two tendencies, and saw how they are not simply a matter of political differences, but have implications on how science, education and the whole society should and can be organized. Finally, we tried to suggest which factors come into play when the history which develops after the thirties is to be understood. The fact that some of them were referred to very briefly - the patterns of colonial administration, the slave system, the economic dependency towards Britain and later the United States - does not that they are less significant; on the contrary, they set the limits in which our analysis is valid.

We believe, however, that, in spite of its limits, there is place, in Brazilian society, for politics, which is another way of saying that there are options to be made. To show where the options are and what persons, groups and political actors can affect them is the main justification for global interpretations of this kind.